

ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE  
Forty-eighth Legislature – Second Regular Session

**ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE**

Minutes of Meeting  
Thursday, October 9, 2008  
Senate Hearing Room 1 -- 1:30 p.m.

Chairman Maguire called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and attendance was noted by the secretary.

**Members Present**

Dr. John Baracy  
Mr. Jim DiCello  
Ms. Margaret Dugan  
Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein  
Ms. Karen Merritt  
Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

**Members Absent**

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Anna Rosas

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

**Approval of September 11, 2008 Minutes of Task Force Meeting**

**Ms. Dugan moved, seconded by Ms. Klein, to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2008 Task Force meeting. The motion carried with Dr. Baracy and Mr. DiCello abstaining.**

**Review, Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed Alternate Model for Sunnyside Unified School District**

Jean Favela, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Sunnyside Unified School District, said the Members were previously given an alternative model, which has been revised. The only differentiation is targeting Intermediate level students at schools in the performing or highly performing AZ LEARNS category that also have a 25 percent or better reclassification rate. A breakdown of Intermediate students at each of those schools shows how many students are already meeting or exceeding the standards, falling far below or approaching. The district is working very aggressively with a consistent school improvement process and drilling data down to individual students in order to focus on those who need additional interventions. She said everything else conforms to the mandate. There are four hours of English Language Development (ELD) for students in the lower levels of proficiency and three hours plus one identical to the Phoenix Union model for those in the middle levels of proficiency, with the only differentiation being the target group in the particular schools.

Chairman Maguire noted that the Phoenix Union model is not a three plus one model, but a four-hour model with the use of a content textbook for teaching ELD. Ms. Favela replied that it is three hours of ELD and one hour of content reading. The language objective instrument used for all schools incorporates into all of the classes, not just ELD, although it is more intense in ELD.

Ms. Klein asked about changes from the previous model. Ms. Favela said previously there were two hours of ELD and two hours of applied ELD where high-level English Language Learners (ELL) and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students would be integrated with a focus on language development with content. It was determined that could be addressed more with the curriculum, approach and existing teachers.

Ms. Dugan said the students can be reassessed as early as December, so perhaps some could be reclassified within the semester. Ms. Favela replied that the model requires a mid-term assessment for Intermediate level students. Ms. Dugan indicated that it seems late to begin a new model since it is already October. Ms. Favela responded that the students are currently in classes, and efforts are being made to do as much as possible with existing staff, which is always an issue. Efforts are also being made to make sure students who need extra help receive intervention, which is a focus district-wide. In speaking to colleagues, the model is not implemented 100 percent because there is not adequate staff in all areas, but it is fairly close. The schools want to integrate students as much as possible.

Ms. Dugan suggested that it would be easier to retain the students, continue with the focus structured process, and if the students are close on the cusp before becoming proficient, they could be tested on the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) in December, then students could be moved the second semester, which would be less stress on the master schedule. Ms. Favela responded that there are no plans to make major changes right now, but because of the timeline of the way decisions for the model have been made, the district wants to have this option. Ms. Merritt noted that only elementary and middle school grades are mentioned on the handout (Attachment 2). Ms. Julia Lindberg, Director, Language Acquisition and Development, Sunnyside Unified School District, explained that the high schools are not included because they do not meet the criteria of performing or better on AZ LEARNS and a 25 percent or higher reclassification rate.

Ms. Merritt asked which groups are integrated with proficient students in the elementary and middle schools. Ms. Favela replied that only ELL students are in the ELD block, and once FEP students are proficient, they are integrated, but that is not occurring now. The intent is not to have beginners with high Intermediate students, which creates difficulties, so efforts are made to keep Pre-Emergent and Emergent Low Basic together and High Basic and Intermediate students together. In some classes where there are very few ELL students, they have placed, for example, three Individualized Language Learner Plan (ILLP) students in regular classrooms.

Chairman Maguire said he does not see anything in the law relating to the performing basis of the school or the reclassification rate as criteria. Ms. Favela answered that is part of the model in order to strategically place the students where they would have the four hours, but it would be addressed in terms of their classes and not exactly in the strict form of the ELD criteria. It would apply to students who are Intermediate level at all schools that meet the criteria. Ms. Lindberg indicated there are 22 schools. Not all of the elementary and middle schools and neither of the

high schools qualified under the criteria, so the intent is to make sure students are able to move proficiency-wise and receive more grade level content and curriculum.

Chairman Maguire asked if a new student who tested Intermediate would be subject to this model. Ms. Favella replied that it would depend on where the student is functioning and their previous instruction. Chairman Maguire said even first-year students would be subject to this example and asked what would happen with the minimum two hours of ELD. Ms. Favella said that is where the students would have oral language and grammar, which would be integrated with reading and writing, but the focus would be on language development. The district has the Discrete Skills Inventory (DSI) and all of the teachers have been going through training. It appears that grammar needs to be the focus of ELD.

Chairman Maguire stated that in the model, students at the basic level receive four hours, which is divided into 30 minutes of oral, 60 minutes of grammar, 60 minutes of reading, 60 minutes of vocabulary and 30 minutes of writing. He asked what portions would remain or be eliminated. Ms. Favella answered that portions would not be eliminated, but the students would have reading and writing in a content class with a more integrated fashion. The oral and grammar would stay in ELD, but it is not an isolated grammar because grammar cannot be taught without addressing it in some context. Chairman Maguire said that topic has been discussed at length and there are differing views.

Mr. DiCello asked the district-wide percentage of the reclassification rate. Ms. Lindberg said last year, it was about 22 percent, for K-12. Ms. Merritt questioned how many years it takes a student at a Pre-emergent or Emergent proficiency level to become proficient. Ms. Lindberg answered that it depends on the student's literacy level because those who are literate in their home language generally move faster. From past experience, it takes between two and three-and-a-half years. Ms. Favella added that a mini study was done of students at some of the schools on how long it was taking. Looking at Gallego School, which had high achievement anyway, students at the Pre-emergent level still took between two and five years. If the students came to the school in Kindergarten, by third or fourth grade many were reclassified, so it depends on where they started and their literacy level. For students that arrived highly literate at the high school level, several passed the Arizona Instrument for Measuring Success (AIMS) test after three years.

Ms. Haver asked for clarification that five-year-old students who entered Kindergarten took four years to become English proficient. Ms. Favella noted that the study was done a while back and some were English proficient after two years. She said the criteria has changed with the assessment. Some students became English proficient after two years, but it was still the three-year mark where many students were not English proficient. Writing often kept students from becoming English proficient.

Ms. Haver asked if writing is still a problem since the test is different. Ms. Favella answered that in testing with AZELLA at the Kindergarten level, more of the students come out ELL because it has that literacy component and reading and writing. Ms. Haver wondered how many children who are not ELL are not able to read and write at five years old.

Ms. Dugan said the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) does not require that non-ELL children read and write prior to Kindergarten, so discussions are underway with the U.S.

Department of Education about that discrepancy. Ms. Favela ventured that if all of the students in the entire district were tested, many would not be able to pass the AZELLA. Ms. Dugan said ADE prefers that only the oral piece be given to Kindergarten children. She asked if other teachers would be responsible for teaching the reading and writing and following the proficiency standards for ELL. For example, would a third grader in two hours of ELD have the same teacher for the other two hours? Ms. Favela said it is recommended in Kindergarten and first grade that there is not a lot of shifting around, so the students would remain with one teacher. The district just wants to have the option for students who are able to meet the criteria and are in a school where they are doing well to have the two hours in a regular reading and writing class.

Ms. Dugan envisioned a scenario in which she is a third grade ELD teacher with 20 students teaching four hours of ELD, and there are Intermediate students in the class. She questioned where they would go. Ms. Favela replied that she would have been assigned a mixed class for homeroom, and there are three teachers, so at a particular time the children regroup, for SFA, for example, and the Pre-emergent and Emergent students would go to one teacher, the Intermediate students would go to another teacher and the Low Basic students would go to another teacher. In this model, it would be for two hours, then everyone would regroup and the students would be strategically placed according to their needs.

Ms. Haver asked if there were four or five students who are really achieving, the option of placing them in regular classes for two hours is to provide more of a challenge for those students. Ms. Favela agreed, noting that it depends on the number of teachers, available space and available staff, but when students reach a certain level, they could be placed in a regular class for reading and writing. She acknowledged that it is generally reading and writing that holds students back and noted that many students, with some support, can handle grade level curriculum, but the focus is always on vocabulary. Ms. Haver said that is why she believes it is good to have the option to test students at least in mid-year because children learn at different speeds. Ms. Favela clarified that in her model (the Sunnyside) all of the Intermediate students would be tested mid-year.

Ms. Dugan speculated that in two months the students could be totally reclassified into the mainstream. Ms. Lindberg said they could be, but in case they are not, this option would be available. Ms. Favela added that the students would probably still need four hours. Ms. Dugan commented that it seems like a lot of moving around. Ms. Haver noted that the tests cannot totally be trusted because some students can do well, but no matter what test is given, they do not do well on tests.

Ms. Dugan asked if there is a clause in this law that once students meet or exceed the standards in reading and writing, they are exempt from ELD, which the Members said there is not. Ms. Haver surmised that the problem is the fear that if this is allowed, everybody would be doing it, and the students who need the four hours would not be getting them. Ms. Favela noted that the students would be meeting or exceeding the standards already. Ms. Dugan said ADE is asking the federal government if the AIMS test can be used to reclassify instead of the AZELLA. Ms. Favela said the intent is to look at individual student achievement to determine what the students who are falling far below really need and place the students accordingly. This model gives the option to have that flexibility.

Ms. Dugan remarked that teachers who have been trained on the ELD structure are teaching toward AZELLA proficiency, so students moved into the mainstream where the teachers are not focused on AZELLA could get lost in the shuffle and may not pass the AZELLA. Ms. Lindberg said that is part of strategically placing the students. Many teachers have a full Structured English Immersion (SEI) endorsement and some have the provisional and are working toward the full. About 175 teachers have been trained in ELD using the DSI, and not only ELD teachers, but some of the content area teachers as well, so that will be continued so students are not just placed with anybody.

Ms. Dugan asked if the Phoenix Union model or the Glendale model helped. Ms. Favela said the difficulty is having all targeted students forced into four hours when that may or may not be necessary. Ms. Dugan said the Phoenix Union model has four hours, but the fourth hour uses science or social studies with ELD. She acknowledged that the students are still only ELL students.

Ms. Merritt said the model states that if high school students pass the reading portion of the AZELLA, they are exempt from taking the reading, and if they pass the writing portion, they could be excused from the writing class. She asked if the same applies to the elementary schools. The other Members said it only applies to middle and high schools. Chairman Maguire added that it is also only in the second or subsequent year.

Chairman Maguire remarked that he heard during the testimony that two hours would be reading and writing in a content classroom, that students would be in a regular classroom with non-ELLS, and the document says the two hours would be ELD Reading and ELD Writing. Those are three alternatives of what will happen in the two hours, which is problematic because he is not confident as to what will happen to the students in the second two hours. He does not see support in the law for exempting first-year students from this nor is there any reference, which he believes is a terrible precedent, to establish school-based criteria for treatment of students. Also, if 25 percent are reclassified each year that would imply a four-year reclassification process, which does not meet the requirement of the law that the period shall not normally exceed one year. There are substantial hurdles in the law by which the Task Force is bound.

Ms. Favela said she understands, but they have to go by their spirit and the governing board, so every attempt is made to not segregate as much as possible. Chairman Maguire said he knows there have been dozens of meetings with ADE staff and she and Ms. Lindberg worked very diligently. Ms. Favela agreed, adding that they have been very happy with the support from ADE, but when real life, real children and real rooms are involved, it makes a difference.

**Mr. DiCello moved, seconded by Ms. Dugan, to approve the proposed alternate model for Sunnyside Unified School District.**

Chairman Maguire reiterated his concern that the model violates several of the immutable provisions of this relatively inflexible law.

**The motion failed by a roll call vote of 2 ayes and 5 nays.**

John Baracy – Aye, Jim DiCello – Nay, Eileen Klein – Nay, Dr. Eugene Garcia – Absent, Margaret Dugan – Nay, Johanna Haver – Nay, Karen Merritt – Aye, Anna Rosas – Absent, Chairman Maguire – Nay.

**Chairman Maguire announced that the alternative model is denied.**

**Update on Arizona Department of Education Activities Regarding Implementation of the Structured English Immersion Models**

Chairman Maguire noted that John Stollar and Marlene Johnston are meeting with assessment personnel and could not attend, so Ms. Santa Cruz will provide an update.

Adela Santa Cruz, Director of Program Effectiveness, Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS), Arizona Department of Education, provided an update on two ongoing projects:

- Monitoring of school districts began on September 15, and as of today, 7 school districts were monitored in September and 16 in October. A few teams are out every week; in fact, one returned last night and one is still out in the field. The teams are monitoring for compliance, as well as corrective action follow-up and other components of the SEI models. The monitoring should be done by the end of March 2009 (between 90 and 95 school districts). In addition, new OELAS personnel went through a few weeks of training so they are aware of what to look for as they go out to monitor the districts. Also, a notebook full of information was compiled for personnel to carry with them, in order to gather information to analyze.
- SEI training of teachers began in January. The first Round 2A was finished last week and involved three days of 20 hours of training. They are in the middle of planning the second phase, which is being called Round 2B, as well as Round 2C, which will total 45 hours of SEI training. The next phase is due to begin the last week in October. The 20 highest ELL populated districts will be scheduled first because they will be able to affect over 60 percent of ELLs in Arizona. Rounds 2B and 2C should be done by mid-April 2009, at which time all other school districts will be able to sign up on-line for training throughout the rest of the spring and summer of 2009. She added that some districts are still asking for Round 2A, so those sessions may be put on video or some kind of format that could be easily distributed.

Ms. Santa Cruz related that a few weeks ago, she and three of her colleagues visited Yuba City, California where four hours of ELD is implemented at Yuba City High School, as well as Madera, California where four hours of ELD is implemented at James Madison Elementary School. Everyone was pleased to see what is being done in terms of training in action with students. It is very successful, especially at the high school, and they were able to access statistics showing that within 18 months of implementing the four hours of ELD, the number of students passing the California achievement standards test more than doubled, and in some cases, tripled. She and her colleagues were escorted by one of the consultants, Kevin Clark.

She reiterated that training is underway with OELAS staff and it is ongoing. It is important to keep up with research and know what is going on in the field. OELAS staff go out and train other teachers, and she believes they continue to very positively affect teachers in Arizona.

**Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

A brief discussion occurred about the third “birthday” of the Task Force.

### **Call to the Public**

No one requested to speak.

### **Discussion of Future Meeting Dates**

Chairman Maguire stated that the next meeting will held on November 13.

**Mr. DiCello moved that the meeting be adjourned.**

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

### **Arizona ELL Task Force**

Alan Maguire, Chairman